

Hervey Ely House  
(Irondequoit Chapter House  
Daughters of the American Revolution)  
138 Troup Street  
Rochester  
Monroe County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5661

HABS  
NY,  
28-ROCH,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HERVEY ELY HOUSE

(IRONDEQUOIT CHAPTER HOUSE, DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION)

NY,  
28-ROCH,  
2-  
(Page 1)

Location: 138 Troup Street, northwest corner of Troup Street and Livingston Park, Rochester, Monroe County, New York

Present Owner and Occupant: Irondequoit Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution

Present Use: Chapter house with second floor apartments

Statement of Significance: The Hervey Ely House sits like a small Greek temple on top of a hill in Rochester's architecturally significant Third Ward Historic District. As one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in western New York, it features free-standing Doric columns, entablatures, pilasters and antae. The interior has elaborate plaster decorations and fine marble fireplaces. This structure is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It has been designated a landmark by the Rochester Preservation Board.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1837.
2. Architect: Attributed to Hugh or S. P. Hastings by C. F. Schmidt in Greek Revival Architecture in the Rochester Area. Attributed to Joseph Bissel by the Rochester Society of Architects. Talbot Hamlin simply recognizes that the structure is "the work of a skilled designer."
3. Original and subsequent owners: "... the south one half of land which is part of lot thirty five which is a subdivision of town lot fifty one in township one in the short range west of the Genesee River bounded on the east by property lately owned by John Dickson, on the west by High Street, on the South by Troup Street, on the north by a line running halfway between Troup Street and lands owned by Henry E. Rochester ..."

1835 Deed, April 2, 1835, Book 33, p. 136.  
From: James Livingston and Charlotte, his wife.  
To: Hervey Ely.  
For: \$2,000.00.

- 1842 Deed, December 21, 1842, Book 60, p. 55.  
From: Hervey Ely.  
To: Selah Mathews,  
This conveyance was made with the understanding  
that Mathews would sell the estate, using the  
proceeds to pay Ely's creditors.
- 1844 Deed, February 6, 1844, Book 64, p. 72.  
From: Isaac Palmer, Master in Chancery.  
To: Selah Mathews.  
For: \$500.00.  
This deed is for the purchase at auction of the land  
where the dwelling house of Hervey Ely is situated,  
being ninety-nine feet on both Livingston Park and  
High Street and three hundred and seventy-six feet  
along Troup Street.
- 1845 Deed, December 6, 1845, Book 73, p. 263.  
From: Fletcher M. Haight, Master in Chancery.  
To: William Kidd.  
For: \$3,700.00.  
The above property was again purchased at auction.
- 1850 Deed, April 9, 1850, Book 91, p. 4.  
From: William Kidd.  
To: Aristarchus Champion.  
For: \$15,000.00.
- 1856 Deed, April 26, 1856, Book 132, p. 71.  
From: Aristarchus Champion.  
To: William Kidd.  
For: \$20,000.00.
- 1863 Deed, January 23, 1863, Book 176, p. 197.  
From: William Kidd and Eleanor E., his wife.  
To: Ambia Brody of New York City.  
For: \$25,000.00.
- 1864 Deed, March 1, 1864, Book 186, p. 211.  
From: Ambia Brody and Azariah Brody, her husband.  
To: David W. Kilbourne and William Leighton, both  
of Keokuk, Iowa.  
For: \$30,000.00.
- 1864 Deed, June 6, 1864, Book 186, p. 226.  
From: David W. Kilbourne and William Leighton.  
To: Jonathon Watson, Titusville, Pennsylvania.

- 1868 Deed, n. d., Book 220, p. 69.  
From: Jonathon Watson and Elizabeth, his wife.  
To: Edgar Holmes.  
For: \$25,000.00  
The property description states that the frontage on  
Troup Street is now two hundred and twenty feet.
- 1877 Deed, February 6, 1877, Book 296, p. 391.  
From: Edgar Holmes and Emma M., his wife.  
To: Caroline Townsend Osgood, wife of Howard  
Osgood.  
For: \$17,000.00.
- 1888 Deed, n. d., Book 432, p. 7.  
From: Edgar Holmes of Chicago.  
To: Caroline Townsend Osgood.  
For: \$1.00.  
The description states that this conveyance is for  
the extension of the property to the center of  
Troup Street and Livingston Park.
- 1912 Deed, April 12, 1912, Book 892, p. 23.  
From: Heirs of Caroline T. Osgood.  
To: Maud H. Reiner.
- 1919 Deed, March 26, 1919, Book 1042, p. 422.  
From: Maud H. Reiner.  
To: Harry C. Reiner, husband of grantor.
- 1920 Deed, May 8, 1920, Book 1096, p. 42.  
From: Harry C. Reiner of St. Louis.  
To: The Irondequoit Chapter of the National Society  
of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans: None known.
6. Alterations and additions: The large wing at the rear of  
the house and the shed dormer are later additions, but the  
exact dates of construction are not known. The carriage  
house (annex) was connected to the main house by a covered  
walk-through after 1920.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Hervey Ely, a wealthy owner of the Red Mill grist mill, was  
one of the leaders of Rochester during the booming flour  
milling period. After the collapse of the grain market in  
1841, Ely was forced to sell the house. Subsequent owners  
were all prominent citizens of Rochester.

The house is built on a hill near the site of the Seneca Indians' Last Sacrifice of the White Dog.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds, Monroe County Clerk's Office. Liber 50, p. 55, contains Ely's deed of trust to Selah Mathews and includes a complete inventory of Ely's possessions.

Wills, Surrogate's Court, Hall of Justice.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Barrington, Lewis. Historic Restorations of the Daughters of the American Revolution. New York: Richard Smith, 1941.

Hamlin, Talbot. Greek Revival Architecture in America. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964.

McIntosh, Prof. W. H. History of Monroe County, New York. Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign and Everts, 1877.

Rochester Society of Architects. A Chronicle of Architecture and Architects in Rochester. Prepared for the 20th anniversary meeting, Nov. 16, 1939.

Schmidt, Carl. Greek Revival Architecture in the Rochester Area. Scottsville, N. Y.: Carl Schmidt, 1946.

Schmidt, Carl and Ann Schmidt. Architecture and Architects of Rochester, N. Y. Rochester: Rochester Society of Architects, 1959.

Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc. This Is Rochester, the Third Ward Today, A Report of the Third Ward Committee. Rochester: School of Art and Design, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1965.

2. Likely sources not yet investigated: Papers, Library of the Irondequoit Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

Prepared by Kevin Patrick Harrington  
Society For the Preser-  
vation of Landmarks in  
Western New York  
March 3, 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This fine example of the fully developed Greek Revival style exists in a nearly unaltered state.
2. Condition of fabric: The structure has received good maintenance.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately forty feet by sixty-four feet; three bay projecting center section with flanking one story wings; two-and-a-half stories; T-shaped with north-south rear two story addition.
2. Foundations: The elevated stuccoed masonry foundations are topped with a narrow water table.
3. Wall construction: The brick walls covered with stucco are painted a light grey. All trim is painted white. A stone string course between the first and second floor continues as a molded cornice on the single story wings.
4. Structural system, framing: The masonry walls are load bearing.
5. Chimneys: The six prominent interior brick chimneys are located two each on the north and south sides of the main block, and two on the rear addition.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The east main entrance wood door with two vertical panels is flanked by fluted pilasters with carved capitals of egg, dart, and leaf motifs. These support a wide transom bar which is divided into a frieze and cornice. Above the door is a narrow transom sash. Between the fluted pilasters and the large plain pilasters which support an entablature topped with elaborately carved acroteria, are narrow solid

wood panels in place of sidelights. There are exterior entrances at the north and south ends of the service hall which is contained in the rear addition, immediately adjacent to the main block.

- b. Windows: All first story windows and second story windows in the addition are double hung with six over six light sashes. All second story windows in the main block are double hung with three over three light sashes. All windows have projecting stone sills and flush lintels which have been stuccoed. The east facades of the wings contain a pair of floor-to-ceiling windows deeply recessed and separated and framed by wide piers in the form of paneled antae. This composition is finished by a low ornamental cast iron balcony which is attached above the water table. A round window is located on the north and south ends of the wings. There is a hooded window in the gable of the portico.
7. Roof: The shingled gabled roof of the central block has a cornice with mutule blocks and guttae. The wide entablature is divided into a plain architrave and a frieze ornamented with triglyphs. The later shed dormers with parapets between the paired chimneys on the north and south sides have four double hung, single light sashed windows. The flat roofs of the wings are finished with a low solid parapet wall which is topped with a coping. The rear addition has a slightly pitched seamed tin roof painted red. It is finished with boxed eaves and a slightly molded cornice.
8. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: The prominent pedimented east portico is supported by four fluted Greek Doric columns. Five stone steps with metal handrails provide access to the elaborately framed entrance. There is a double staired Greek stoop with iron handrails at the north side entrance. There is a side porch at the rear south side entrance.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The side entrance provides access to a hall from which open the double parlors to the left and an office to the right, in the north wing. The library in the south wing is reached through the rear

- parlor. The hall continues to the rear providing access to the north-south hall from which open the dining room and kitchen. The second floor contains two apartments, one in the main block and one in the rear section.
2. Stairways: The open curved stairway has two turned and tapered balusters per step, a single turned newel and molded handrail. The second floor newel post is decorated with an inverted pineapple. The nosed steps are finished with applied S-scrolls. The rear stairway leads from the north entrance to the second floor.
  3. Flooring: All flooring is of narrow waxed oak strips.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings are painted plaster. All principal rooms in the main block are finished with boxed cornices and molded baseboards. In the entrance hall the cornice is finished with a running stylized leaf design and a bead and reel molding. The same leaf design finishes the boxed cornice in the double parlors. Below is a frieze with applied closed festoons. The recessed ceiling panel is edged with an egg and dart motif. The finishing is not as elaborate in the wings or dining room.
  5. Doorways and doors: Natural finished two panel vertical doors are set in elaborately pilastered doorways. The panel pilasters have capitals with running acanthus design in a frieze which is bordered by egg and dart and bead and reel moldings. The pilasters support a deep frieze with applied acanthus leaf and scroll motifs. This is topped by a boxed and molded cornice. The deeply recessed windows are framed with the same decorative motifs. They are fitted with panels below and paneled and louvred jalousies. Sliding wood doors between the parlors are framed like the doors and windows. These larger pilasters have carved acanthus leaves in the central panel.
  6. Special decorative features: There are seven marble fireplaces. The arched openings of those in the parlor are fitted with cast iron grates and fenders. Scrolled keystone and end brackets terminate in a shell motif. Each has a shaped marble mantel. Other similar fireplaces are located in the dining room and front and



middle bedrooms. There are two additional fireplaces in the basement.

7. Hardware: All hardware is brass, but does not appear to be original.
8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: Modern.
  - b. Lighting: Modern.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is sited on top of a hill, facing east.
2. Historic landscape design: A low stone retaining wall along the sidewalk opens to steps, walks and terracing.
3. Outbuildings: A later brick carriage house, located to the west of the house, is connected to the house via a walk-through.
4. Walks: The stepped walk provides access to the main entrance.

Prepared by Amy Hecker  
Society For the Pre-  
servation of Land-  
marks in Western New  
York  
March 15, 1973

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project of twenty-six selections of historical and architecturally significant Rochester structures was undertaken in 1966, by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc., Mrs. Patrick Harrington, Executive Director, in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey, James C. Massey, Chief. The project was under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Senior Historian. Architectural and historical descriptions were contributed by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York, Inc. General photographic documentation was undertaken by Hans Padelt, Senior Engineer, Graflex, on a

contractual basis with the Historic American Buildings Survey. The final documentation and editing was done by Susan R. Slade in 1978, for transmittal to the Library of Congress and the impending publication of the Historic American Buildings Survey New York State catalogue.